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Adjuvant effect of cholera toxin on the mucosal immune response to soluble proteins. Differences between mouse strains and protein antigens.

Wilson AD, Stokes CR, Bourne FJ.

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We examined the effect of orally administered cholera toxin (CT) on the immune response to keyhole limpet haemocyanin (KLH) and ovalbumin (OVA) in high (C57Bl/6 H2b), medium (CBA H2k), and low (BALB/c H2d) responder I-A haplotypes to CT. Mice were fed OVA or KLH on three occasions at 10-day intervals and the effect of simultaneous feeding of CT determined. Isotype-specific antibody levels were assayed in serum samples collected 7 days after the last immunization. Antibody was also measured in the supernatant of gut explant cultures incubated at either 4 or 37 degrees C. Increased antibody levels in cultures kept at 37 degrees C indicated release of local intracellular antibody. Cholera toxin exerted an adjuvant effect on the mucosal response of all three strains to KLH and OVA. Overall, the responses to CT and the second protein were not correlated; we interpret these findings to indicate that while CT had an effect on the mucosal immune system which enhances the immune response to itself and other protein antigens, the final outcome of the response to the second antigen is dependent on differences in the ability of the strains to process, recognize, and respond to a particular antigen.

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